

# OUR KATRINA STORY

The Storm, The Response and Today



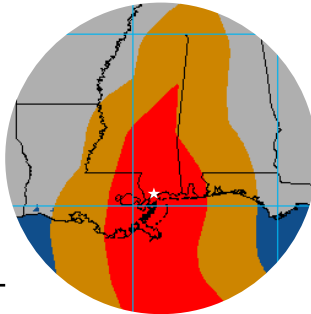
# 10 YEARS LATER

August 29, 2005 - August 29, 2015

## About Gulfport

- 2nd largest city in Mississippi
- 64 square miles
- Pre-Katrina population of 73,299\*
- Current population of 71,750\*

\*Source: Google Public Data/U.S. Census Bureau  
Current population as of July 2014



## About Hurricane Katrina

- Strikes land August 29, 2005
- 6am hurricane winds of 75 mph
- 8 hours of winds up to 150 mph**
- 28-foot storm surge**

## The Damage

### 9,500 Gulfport housing units affected

- 3,000 units destroyed
- 1,734 units severely damaged
- 4,468 moderately damaged
- 369 lightly damaged

### Numerous businesses and public facilities affected

- Complete loss of the city's two gaming facilities; significant economic impact of \$13,700 daily loss of gaming revenue to the city
- 404 FEMA-funded projects
- 63 city-owned public buildings damaged or destroyed
- 21 city-owned parks and recreational facilities destroyed
- 20 projects related to sandbagging, emergency repairs, search and rescue, provisions of food, water, ice and other essential needs
- 10 projects related to infrastructure - water, sewer and drainage

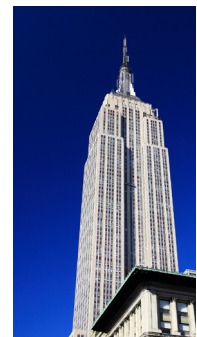
## The Debris

### 3 million cubic yards removed\*

- 18 months for completion
- Total cost of \$79.7 million

\*From the City of Gulfport alone

**AMOUNT OF  
DEBRIS REMOVED  
EQUIVALENT TO  
THE EMPIRE STATE  
BUILDING**



Above left: Intersection of 2nd St. and 20th Ave., an established residential area

Above right: A downtown business/residential area



Gulfport Yacht Club, before and after



First Baptist Church, before and after

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## Fire Department

### Dedicated despite great loss

- 12 stations damaged; one destroyed
- Nearly every vehicle in the fleet damaged
- Firefighters went straight to work, many not knowing the well-being of their own families and homes
- Worked up to 11 days straight to respond to our citizens



Left: All that remained of Gulfport Fire Station #7  
Right: Parking lot of the Police Department during the storm

## Police Department

### Devastated but not down

- 44 of 300 employees displaced, 25 rendered completely homeless
- Lost main police headquarters
- Lost 46 vehicles
- Operated in "hurricane mode" for approximately three months
- Police department displaced until 2010

### Our police officers' personal stories

- Elfren Acosta's wife and his 7-month-old baby road out the storm on the rooftop of their house in Bay St. Louis; their survival was not known until he and other officers drove to Bay St. Louis the night after the storm to find them
- Leonard Papania abandoned his flooding home, sunk his police car and walked a mile in the storm to get rescued by other officers (Papania now serves as Police Chief)

## Public Works Department

### Hit the ground running

- One week to clear major roads
- One week to restore water to 90% of city
- Three weeks to remove boil water notice
- Four weeks to restore sewer & traffic signals

## Planning Department

### Rebuilding begins

- Issued 12,527 building permits between Sept 1, 2005 and Dec 31, 2005
- Issued 10,000 building permits from 2006 to present

**12,527**  
building permits  
were issued  
Sept 1, 2005 -  
Dec 31, 2005.

## Volunteers

### Came from near and far

- Response came within hours
- Organizations, faith-based groups, individuals
- Law enforcement and fire departments from across the country and our own state
- Vicksburg, MS Fire Dept was a leader in providing assistance, going as far as to help firefighters rebuild their homes
- Canadian police officers helped rebuild homes of Gulfport officers
- Many volunteer groups returned multiple times

## Funding

### Over \$300 million received

- \$231.6 million in public assistance from FEMA
- All FEMA-related projects completed by August 2012; 7 years after Hurricane Katrina
- \$52.7 million in Community Development Block Grants
- \$10.4 million in streetscape restoration
- Over \$8 million in Hazard Mitigation grants
- \$1 million from Jim Barksdale Foundation
- \$250,000 from Leo Seal Foundation

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## A Stronger Infrastructure

**Total replacement cost of \$70,366,418**

- 40 miles of water
- 18 miles of sewer
- 8 miles of storm drains
- 4 new sewer lift stations
- All infrastructure projects completed by April 2012

**Gulfport was  
FIRST TO FINISH  
its infrastructure  
projects**

## Improved Quality of Life

**More than \$55 million in  
repairs & replacements  
of community facilities**

**Plus, new facilities including:**

- Barksdale Pavilion & Leo Seal Plaza
- Jones Park
- Gulfport Marina and Harbormaster Office
- Bayou View Park
- Charles L. Walker Senior Center
- Dedeaux Road Community Center
- Gaston Hewes Recreation Center
- West Side Community Center



Jones Park/Gulfport Small Craft Marina today

## Historic Preservation and Beautification

**Facade restoration &  
streetscape project**

- Facades of more than 70 historic buildings restored
- Many date back more than a century
- \$10.4 million streetscape project

**LARGEST  
facade restoration  
program in  
U.S. to date**

## Better Public Safety

**\$21,847,879 police dept facility**

- Robert Curry Municipal Complex replaced main police headquarters lost in the storm
- Houses police department, municipal court and legal department
- Contains an emergency operations center
- Can operate as a self-contained building devoid of electric, water and sewer utilities

**\$5,600,832 in fire dept improvements**

- 11 fire stations repaired and upgraded
- New Station #7
- \$410,784 in vehicle repairs (included in \$5.6m)



Left: Robert Curry Municipal Complex

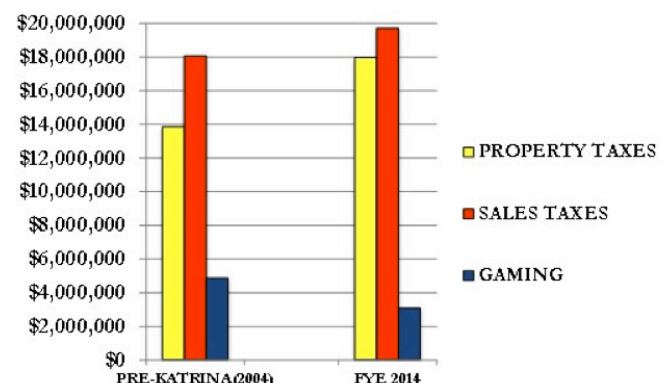
Right: Gulfport Fire Station #7

(images via eleyguildhardy.com, starkscontracting.com)

## Increased Tax Revenue

**Taxes exceed pre-Katrina numbers**

- Property and sales taxes up
- Gaming represents one casino vs two pre-Katrina





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### Mayor of Gulfport

#### Billy Hewes

bhewes@gulfport-ms.gov

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Coast, Billy Hewes was serving as our State Senator. As Mayor of Gulfport, he continues a life of public service that began in 1992. Mayor Hewes is dedicated to the continued refurbishment and rebuilding of key properties, promoting our community resiliency, and celebrating the successes of our city and the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast.

“Hurricane Katrina tested the Coast, and we passed with flying colors. We came back stronger, smarter and better than ever, proving that bricks and mortar do not make a place; it is the resiliency and determination of the people who have a true love for their home.”

-Gulfport Mayor Billy Hewes

### Chief Administrative Officer

#### Dr. John R. Kelly

### City Council

Ward 1 - Kenneth L. Casey, Sr.

Ward 2 - Ricky Dombrowski

Ward 3 - Ella Holmes-Hines

Ward 4 - F.B. “Rusty” Walker IV

Ward 5 - Myles Sharp

Ward 6 - Robert “R. Lee” Flowers

Ward 7 - Cara L. Pucheu

### Public Information Officer

#### Chris Vignes

cvignes@gulfport-ms.gov

228.234.8590



Fireworks over Jones Park and Gulfport Harbor, 2014  
Photo courtesy of Jason Taylor Photography

### What is One Coast?

#### We stand together...

Hurricane Katrina devastated the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast, from bridge to bridge and beyond. No one was spared her wrath. If we learned one thing, it is that lines on a map cannot separate or divide us. As one of America's best kept secrets, we are “Open For Business and Geared for A Good Time.” We are One Coast.



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[facebook.com/cityofgulfport](https://facebook.com/cityofgulfport)